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THURSDAY, JUNE 19, 2003

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Boy, 14, gets 6 years for fatal shooting

By Sharon Turco

The Cincinnati Enquirer

Cincinnati lawyer Clyde Bennett III said there is no justification for the hail of bullets his 14-year-old client fired last winter, killing one person, paralyzing another and injuring a third.

But as the boy was about to be sentenced in Hamilton County Juvenile Court Wednesday on a charge of involuntary manslaughter and two charges of felonious assault, Bennett explained that his client knew no other recourse for the constant taunts he said the victims hurled.

"He grew up in a neighborhood where this response was normal, where violence is unfortunately the norm," Bennett said, talking about Beekman Street in North Fairmount. "His conduct is consistent with his surroundings."

Judge Sylvia Hendon sentenced the boy - age 13 at the time of the shooting - to spend six years in a Department of Youth Services correctional facility, followed by a year on parole.

If he violates his parole, an adult sentence of 25 years in prison could be imposed.

The *Enquirer* is not naming the boy because of his age.

For months, he had clashed with three teenagers who lived in his Beekman Street apartment building, according to court proceedings.

They had once been friends, but the boy told police

that Michale and Jatawn Swan and their friend, Arick Hudson, taunted him. On Feb. 20, the boy told police he took a .380 semiautomatic handgun from an 18-year-old clerk at a nearby convenience store, and when the boys came near, he started firing.

Arick, 15, died from a gunshot wound; Michale, then 14, who took a bullet in the neck; is paralyzed from the neck, down and remains hospitalized; and Jatawn, then 15, was hit in the fleshy part of his shoulder and has recovered.

"This (shooting) is a microcosm of what's going on in this city; it's clear to me this young man was not acting in a particularly unusual way," Hendon said, turning to Bennett.

"How can we make the killing stop? What can we as a court do? How can we stop this tragic, tragic, epidemic?"

Angela Hudson, Arick's mother, described how hard it has been for her and her five other children without Arick.

"I still see him lying on the ground dead," Hudson said. "I cannot fathom picking my heart up off the ground, it's still where my son died."

Bernice Swan said her sons were not bullying the boy.

"This situation was just out of control," she said through tears. "Nothing will bring Arick back, or make Michale walk, but I hope one day he finds it in his heart to understand what he did."

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